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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 09 PESHAWAR 000111

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: FATA AND NWFP: WEEKLY INCIDENTS OF TALIBANIZATION, MAY 15 - MAY 21

REF: ISLAMABAD 1106

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate Peshawar, U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)  
Introduction

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11. (C) Pakistan's security forces appeared to seize the initiative in Malakand during the third week of May, but militants responded by launching mass-casualty bombing attacks inside Peshawar for the first time since March. In Swat, government troops encircled Mingora and appeared to achieve dominance in Buner and Lower Dir. The security forces claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties on the militants, while themselves sustaining only minimal casualties. Expanding on a trend of the previous week, incidents in Upper Dir, the Chakdara area of Lower Dir, the Kohistani area of upper Swat, Shangla, Mansehra, and Battagram districts appeared to be caused by militants fleeing central and lower Swat, the primary theater of the military's ongoing operation.

12. (SBU) A 38-year-old man displaced from Buner District of NWFP described to a newspaper on May 17 the talibanization that he had seen: "The Taliban are quite intelligent. They initially presented a soft image to endear themselves to the population. However, once they take control of the area, you get to see their full cruelty on display." Reports of rape and forced prostitution in Swat and Buner, commonly described as "dishonoring our women," circulated widely among the fleeing population.

13. (C) Militants appeared to be attempting to strike back against the government in other areas of the NWFP, with twin bomb attacks in Peshawar on May 16, killing 12, and a suicide

bombing in Tank on May 19, killing nine. Another major bombing against a movie theater in Peshawar on the evening of May 22, which killed five and injured scores, falls outside of the scope of this cable but contributes to a disturbing trend of attacks within the city of Peshawar.

Swat

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14. (SBU) The following is a summary of events in Swat, where a February peace agreement broke down:

May 15: Militants killed three security force personnel. Security forces continued to bombard militants in the Peochar Valley and in areas around Mingora and claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties on the militants. Reports surfaced that Taliban were shaving off their beards to escape.

May 17: Militants fired rockets and 12-7 mm machine guns at security forces in Peochar Valley, Maulana Fazlullah's stronghold, killing a Pakistani army officer and injuring two soldiers. Pakistan ground forces entered Matta and Kanju and "intense" battles followed.

May 18: Militants killed an officer and two soldiers, and

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injured three others. Militants in Kanju also destroyed the home of a Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) from the Awami National Party (ANP), kidnapping two of his brothers, a nephew, and two servants. Security forces bombarded militant positions northeast of Mingora and claimed that "fifty percent of Matta was under control." Security forces also claimed to have captured a militant training center in the Peochar Valley.

May 19: Militants killed an army major and one soldier north of Matta and killed one soldier in Peochar. Security forces claimed to kill 16 militants and to encircle Mingora, cutting off militant supply lines.

May 20: Kohistani elders failed to persuade militants to leave Bahrain tehsil peacefully, causing a clash between the militants and a local lashkar in Kalam Valley. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) claimed that residents in Mingora had seen Taliban laying anti-personnel mines throughout the area.

May 21: Security forces reported taking control of a key bridge overlooking Mingora. Security forces reportedly arrested 25 local militants and 30 foreign militants, and killed four, including a reputed Taliban commander.

Buner

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15. (SBU) The following is a summary of events in Buner District, NWFP, a neighboring district to Swat, where the government launched a military operation in the final week of April:

May 15: NWFP Inspector General Police Malik Naveed Khan reported that only 58 of 600 police from Buner were working and warned the others to return to work or face disciplinary action.

May 16: Security forces continued to battle militants in the area of Sultanwas, a village north of Daggar, the district headquarters.

May 17: Reporting from Buner described destruction all around the district, including burnt vehicles, spent artillery shells and broken electric poles all over the roads, along with homes after homes damaged by bullets and artillery.

May 19: Militants killed an army officer and three soldiers in fighting north of Daggar. Militants also injured another officer and 16 other soldiers. Security forces reported killing 16 militants and secured part of Sultanwas.

May 20: Security forces reported that they had fully secured Sultanwas. Militants had reportedly attempted to use six vehicles, driven by terrorists wearing army uniforms, as suicide bombs. The vehicles were destroyed.

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Lower Dir

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16. (SBU) The following is a summary of events in Lower Dir District, NWFP, a neighboring district to Swat, where the government launched a military operation during the final week of April:

May 15: Militants killed five security personnel, while security forces reported killing 12 militants in fighting near Maidan, west of the Lower Dir district headquarters of Timergara, and in the Chakdara area, near the border with lower Swat.

May 16: Security forces bombed the house of local Union Council Nazim (mayor) reportedly occupied by militants. Police also report arresting four fleeing militants.

May 17: Law enforcement agencies imposed a curfew in the Chakdara area, near the Swat border, restricting the flow of IDPs.

May 18: Security forces raided the Timergara district headquarters hospital and arrested two suspected militants.

May 19: Army planes reportedly dropped bombs on four civilian homes in Adenzai, killing two and injuring two others.

May 20: Clashes continued in the Maidan area between militants and government troops.

May 21: Militants killed two soldiers with a remote control bomb near Hajiabad at a checkpoint entering Maidan. Security forces claimed to kill four rebels near the scene. Elsewhere, security forces reported killing militants in Nanbati and Kalpani.

Bajaur and Mohmand

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17. (SBU) The following is a summary of events in Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies, where the Pakistani military has been conducting military operations since August 2008:

May 15, Mohmand: Three people were killed in a landmine explosion. Militants reportedly blew up a government middle school and rural health center in Ambar tehsil, making ten

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schools blown up in the agency over the last three months. Security forces reportedly killed a taliban commander and his two associates in the Sheikhan area.

May 15, Bajaur: The agency continued into its sixth day without electricity, causing banks and post offices to remain closed. The political administration announced increased security measures, while four civilians were injured when a mortar hit their house 30 km from Khar.

May 16, Bajaur: A militant commander and a dozen of his associates surrendered to the political administration.

May 16, Mohmand: A mortar struck a home, injuring a 14-year-old girl and damaging the house.

May 17, Bajaur: Security forces began establishing checkpoints in Mamond area, once a militant stronghold.

May 17, Mohmand: A body of a slaughtered member of the Mohmand Rifles was recovered from Lakaro tehsil.

May 18, Mohmand: The bodies of two Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers were found in Lakaro tehsil. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) spokesman stated the executions were revenge for the killing of five Taliban prisoners in Peshawar on May 8.

May 19, Mohmand: A large number militants attacked security forces after security forces arrested five Arabs, one Afghan, and one local, all of whom were wearing burqas. Security forces reported killing "at least" 13 militants in the subsequent two-hour gun-battle.

May 20, Bajaur: Security forces arrested three foreign militant commanders during a security check in Khar tehsil.

May 21, Mohmand: Political Agent (PA) Amjad Ali Khan announced amnesty for all militants who would lay down their arms as elders from the Safi tribe handed over a local militant commander and five companions. Elsewhere, IDPs reportedly claimed they were forcibly repatriated without any compensation despite pledges by the government and UNHCR.

NWFP

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18. (C) The following incidents have occurred in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) according to press and consulate contacts:

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May 15, Peshawar: Militants reportedly kidnapped an employee of a local pharmaceutical company and beat him severely for wearing western-style pants and shirt.

May 15, Battagram: Locals claim that over 150 militants have begun congregating in the district, threatening residents and local police.

May 16, Peshawar: A powerful car bomb killed 14, including two women and two children, and injured 31, in Kashkal area. Another low-grade device exploded in a busy market, injuring at least six.

May 16, Dera Ismail Khan: Security forces and militants exchanged fire after a vehicle refused to stop near a checkpoint.

May 17, Kohat: Militants reportedly fired three rockets from Dod hills, targeting the district courts, Bahadar Colony, and the cantonment area, with no casualties reported.

May 17, Upper Dir: Militants reportedly assembled in the Dogbala area, refusing pleas by local tribesmen to leave. Jets bombed the site, but one shell hit two civilian homes, killing two women. Locals say the militants arrived in five villages eight months ago.

May 17, Dera Ismail Khan: Militants riding on a motorcycle killed a traffic officer in the city.

May 18, Peshawar: The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) reportedly demanded Rs 25 million in ransom for the release of Afghanistan's Ambassador-designate to Pakistan Farahi who was kidnapped in September 2008 while serving as Consul General in Peshawar.

May 18, Upper Dir: Security forces in helicopter gunships reportedly killed 15 people in an area near the border with Swat; press reports claim that the deceased were civilians.

May 18, Shangla: Elders in the Chakesar area reported that 60-70 taliban had set up a checkpoint in the area and had not complied with elders' attempts to persuade them to go peacefully.

May 19, Peshawar: Militants reportedly have continued threatening city businesses to have their employees wear shalwar-kameez (loose-fitting robe), instead of pants and shirts. The National Jubilee Insurance (NJI) company directed its employees to begin wearing shalwar-kameez after a medical worker was beaten unconscious by taliban for wearing "un-Islamic" clothes.

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May 19, Peshawar: Militants reportedly blew up a police post in the suburbs abandoned two months ago due to a lack of personnel. Militants also damaged a government building on Kohat Road. A man's bullet-riddled body was also found in a graveyard outside the city.

May 21, Peshawar: Militants in Adezai destroyed the house of a leading member of the local lashkar and ambushed security forces who responded; no casualties resulted.

FATA

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19. (C) The following is a roundup of incidents of talibanization in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Frontier Regions:

May 16, Orakzai: A militant and six tribesmen were killed in a helicopter gunship strike.

May 16, FR Kohat: Militants shot and killed a police officer, claiming he was spying on local taliban.

May 17, Orakzai: Taliban claimed to behead a constable for carrying out criminal activities in militant disguise.

May 18, South Waziristan: Four bullet-riddled bodies were discovered on a remote roadside while hundreds of families prepared to leave the area.

May 18, Orakzai: Press reported that the government began secret negotiations through religious clerics with the deputy chief of TTP for the repatriation of 35 Sikh families whom militants recently evicted from the agency.

May 19, Khyber: Militants reportedly damaged two tankers supplying NATO forces in Afghanistan on the Pak-Afghan highway in Landi Kotal. Khasadar personnel from a nearby security post opened fire, causing the militants to flee. Elsewhere, three Khasadars were injured when their vehicle ran by an improvised explosive device (IED).

May 19, South Waziristan: Residents are reportedly fleeing the agency amid a buildup of forces by the army and the taliban.

May 19, FR Tank: A suicide bomber in a truck rammed a Frontier Corps (FC) camp in Jandola, killing nine and injuring 25, including 15 FC personnel. A spokesman for a Taliban group led by Qari Zainuddin claimed that Baitullah Mehsud sent the suicide bomber to eliminate Zainuddin and his key commanders.

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May 20, Khyber: Militants destroyed a private health clinic in Landikotal; the owner had previously been warned by militants not to treat female patients.

May 21, Khyber: Militants fired rockets at a security checkpoint in the Zakhakhel area; no casualties were reported.

May 21, Khyber: A jirga mediated an exchange of hostages taken by Lashkar-i-Islam (LI) for LI hostages taken in response by local tribesmen. LI claimed to have "arrested" the initial hostages due to their involvement in gambling.

#### Government Response

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¶10. (SBU) This is a summary of government responses to "creeping talibanization" according to press and consulate contacts:

May 15, Charsadda: The police claimed to arrest four suspected militants and recover a 5 kg bomb.

May 15, Karak: The police claimed to foil an attempted bombing at a bridge over the Indus Highway, discovering and defusing two

planted bombs.

May 16, Orakzai: Security forces reportedly killed nine militants and injured another 13.

May 16, Mardan: Security forces and police reportedly arrested four militants in Takht Bhai.

May 16, Khyber: The Frontier Corps and Khassadar personnel arrested six suspects during a search operation. The six surrendered at the last moment to save their homes from threatened destruction.

May 17, Khyber: Security forces arrested four Khassadar personnel in Bara on charges of providing shelter to militants.

May 17, FR Kohat: Security forces reportedly arrested 23 suspected militants.

May 18, FR Kohat: Security forces reportedly killed five militants and arrested six others near Darra Adam Khel while they were travelling in five vehicles toward a security forces camp located beside the Friendship Tunnel. Elsewhere, security forces and police reportedly besieged a mosque to arrest a

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militant commander hiding inside.

May 19, Nowshera: Police arrested a suspected Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant based on a tip-off at Jalozei camp and defused three landmines and a mortar shell there.

May 20, Peshawar: Security forces arrested six suspected militants in a local hotel near the city's main bus terminal.

May 21, Haripur: The police claimed to arrest an Afghan national with links to the Taliban, recovering over 200 hand grenades, a Kalashnikov rifle, a laptop, three personal computers, CDs containing Taliban footage, passports and identity cards.

Grass Roots Efforts to Halt Talibanization

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11. (U) The following events are examples of activities taken by local communities to halt the spread of Talibanization:

May 15, Upper Dir: Local leaders claimed that they expelled militants from Usherai and Doog Dara.



May 17, Islamabad: Islamic scholars meeting at a convention presided over by Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan issued a fatwa stating that Islam forbids suicide attacks; the military operation in Swat is a war for the survival of the country; people involved with murder and desecrating holy places had nothing to do with Islam.

May 17, Peshawar: The Swat Qawmi Amn Jirga called on the government and security forces to continue the operation until the militants were eliminated.

May 19, FR Bannu: The elders of Bakakhel peace committee held a jirga stating that there were no militants in the area, urging no military operations, but assuring the government it would help to enforce the writ of the government in the region.

May 19, Upper Dir: Residents of Hayagay Gharbi, a mountainous village east of Dir, decided to raise a force of 200 volunteers to defend their area and take action against militants trying to enter the area.

May 20, Islamabad: About 500 ulema and mashaikh belonging to different schools of religious thought across the country issued statements against militants challenging the writ of the state and denounced suicide bombings, beheadings and desecration of sacred places.

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May 20, Upper Dir: Residents of Doog Darra burned down the house of a man suspected of having harbored militants and of thereby causing the Pakistani armed forces to conduct air strikes in the area.

May 20, Mansehra: Elders in Kala Dhaka handed over to the government a local man alleged to have harbored outside militants in the area, two days after a government ultimatum for the tribes in the area to hand over four locals accused of harboring militants escaping from Swat and Buner.

May 21, Peshawar: Leading members of a local lashkar instructed shopkeepers at a bazaar in the Adezai suburb of Peshawar to take a unified stand against local militants, who had distributed leaflets warning that the bazaar's shops would be destroyed if they were not closed voluntarily.

TRACY